

VIENNA, BUDAPEST AND PRAGUE

15 DAYS



- Each departure limited to 20 guests
- Luxury hotels or best in each location
- Three a la carte meals a day (table d'hote, if unavailable), including beverages of your choice
- Professionally escorted
- All sightseeing, including entrance fees and special events as indicated in the itinerary
- Arrival and departure transfer by private car
- All gratuities included (also your tour manager's)
- Portorage of 2 suitcases per passenger
- Airport departure taxes

Your journey to the imperial cities of Eastern Europe begins in Budapest – actually two ancient cities joined by seven bridges linking the shores of the Danube River. This Baroque city played an important role during the period when the Hapsburg Empire ruled central Europe.

You drive northward into the Tatra Mountains of Slovakia and Poland; and you explore the charming villages, such as Zakopane. Stay in the medieval city of Cracow and visit the beautiful Royal Castle and the fascinating salt mines of Wieliczka.

And in the golden capital of Prague, you stroll across the picturesque Charles Bridge and down cobblestone lanes while visiting glorious art collections in palaces and cathedrals. Traveling southward toward Austria, you overnight in the stunning village of Cesky Krumlov.

And then, you come to Vienna – a true jewel. Your hotel is a palace; visit renowned St. Stephen's Cathedral and Schönbrunn Palace and go to a Mozart concert. There is time reserved to shop along Kärtnerstrasse and Graben and to relax at one of the old-world coffee houses to taste one of those delectable pastries for which the city is famous.

Day 1 (Friday)

USA - BUDAPEST

Depart USA on your overnight flight to Budapest.

Day 2 (Saturday)

BUDAPEST

You are met this morning upon the arrival of your flight and driven by private

car to your hotel – the **Kempinski Corvinus** – right in the city center. A striking building of glass, steel, and granite, it is located on the pedestrian mall, a short walk from the Danube River, the Chain Bridge, and Castle Hill. Your afternoon is free to settle in; your tour manager will be in the lobby to answer any questions you may have. This evening, meet your travel companions for cocktails and à la carte dining in our hotel. (D)

Day 3 (Sunday)

BUDAPEST

The ancient cities of Buda and Pest, divided by the Danube River but linked by seven bridges, offer wonderful Baroque architecture. The tree-lined cobbled streets of Buda lead to the Gellert Hill, the Buda Castle, and views of Pest; you visit the gothic Matthias Church – the last two kings of

Hungary were crowned here. At the beginning of this century, Budapest was considered the second most important city of the Hapsburg Empire (after Vienna) and one of the European artistic and cultural centers.

Returning to the Pest side of the river, you see the Parliament, St. Stephen's Basilica, and Heroes' Square. You have a buffet lunch aboard a cruise boat, floating on the Danube, and gaze at the city's monuments from another perspective. The afternoon is free for strolling along the wide sidewalks to absorb the local scene. There are endless varieties of delicious baked goods in Budapest made with a national favorite - poppy seeds. Try one with a coffee! This evening, you go outside Budapest, to an old inn in the forest for dinner with Hungarian specialties and gypsy dancing. (B,L,D)

Day 4 (Monday)

BUDAPEST - SZENTENDRE - BUDAPEST

This morning, we take a short drive north of the city to Szentendre – a town that has become a favorite of artists and



Parliament, Budapest



Coffeehouse Gerbeaud, Budapest

art enthusiasts. You have lunch here and the opportunity to visit the museums and galleries before returning to Budapest. There is ample time this afternoon back in Budapest to browse through some of the antique shops or bookstores. Look at the interesting ceramics, baskets, and country furniture at shops like Almarium on Avenue Volegeny. The Wine Society on Battyany Utca has a great selection of Hungarian wines. This evening you go to the **Gundel Restaurant** for an à la carte dinner, where you choose from a marvelous variety of Hungarian specialties. For dessert, you have many delicious choices, including *Palatschinken* (crepes), a house specialty. (B,L,D)

Day 5 (Tuesday)

BUDAPEST – HIGH TATRAS - ZAKOPANE

This morning, you journey northward into Slovakia and the rich forests and quaint villages of the Tatra Mountains. A famous winter resort area, especially popular with skiers, this countryside is pristine in its beauty. You have lunch in one of the picturesque villages.

Crossing the Polish border this afternoon, you check into the **Orbis Kasprowy** with spectacular views of the majestic mountains, so close you want to reach out and touch the peaks. The panorama is dotted with little wooden huts; the air is crisp and crystal clear. Join your travel companions for an à la carte dinner in the hotel restaurant and an evening of relaxation amid the mountains. (B,L,D)

Day 6 (Wednesday)

ZAKOPANE - CRACOW

You have a relaxing morning in Zakopane – well known for beautiful wooden houses characteristic of the area. And you also visit Wadowice, birthplace of Pope John Paul II. In the afternoon, you arrive in Cracow - a graceful city nestled in the valley of the Vistula River. It is unknown which people originally settled here, but there is archeological evidence that the area was inhabited 50,000 years ago.

Today, Cracow is the 3rd largest city in Poland and the country's cultural center; the 14th-century Jagiellonian University is located here. Our hotel, the **Forum**, is the most highly regarded establishment in town, overlooking the river and just a few minutes from the historic center of town. This old section (*Stare Miasto*) is replete with literally hundreds of ancient houses, churches, and palaces that hold artistic wonders. This evening, you have an à la carte dinner in the city's old Jewish district, *Kazimierz*, an area rich in history. (B,L,D)

Day 7 (Thursday)

CRACOW

Atop the Wawel Hills is the Royal Castle; here you see huge rooms, their walls covered with tapestries and original Byzantine paintings. You visit Cracow's main square (*Rynek Główny*), which is Europe's largest medieval marketplace and dates back to 1257; it has been compared to Venice's Piazza San Marco in size and grandeur. Outside the city, you go to the unique salt mines of Wieliczka, first mined in 1044 and on the UN's list of protected

sites. Incredibly, within the mines, a huge 180-foot chapel has been carved out of the rock salt. The underground tunnels stretch for more than 100 miles.

In the area surrounding Cracow, the people have taken care to preserve the folklore of the region. Traditional national costumes are worn often in the local villages. Local craftsmen continue to use the methods and tools to build homes that their forefathers used. You return to the city for some leisure time before going to dinner at the **Wierzynek** restaurant - a local dining tradition since 1364. This establishment has been a favorite of Charles de Gaulle, Indira Gandhi, Francois Mitterand, Michail Gorbachov, King Juan Carlos, and George Bush. (B,L,D)

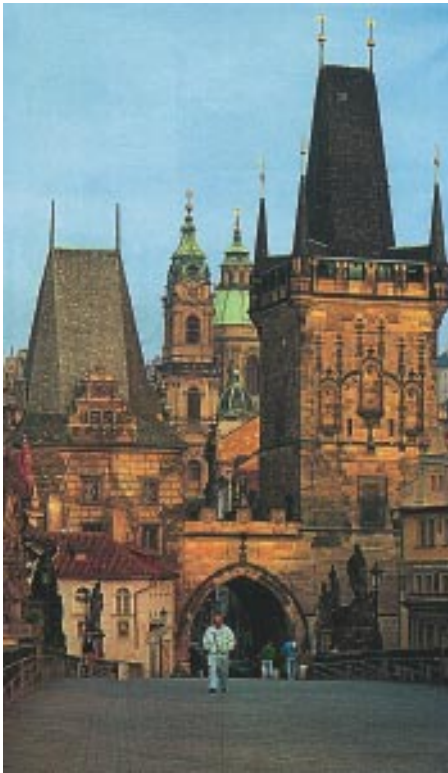
Day 8 (Friday)

CRACOW - BRNO – PRAGUE

On this day, you set off in a south-westerly direction to Brno – capital of the Czech province of Moravia and second largest city in the Czech Republic. It sits in a valley where two rivers join, and hills and forests flank three sides of this fertile southern Moravian wine area. At the beginning of the 19th century, Brno was a center of contemporary Czech culture; in architecture, the city was ranked with the other great European cities. Its location has traditionally connected the industrial northern area with the agricultural south



The High Tatra, Zakopane



Charles Bridge, Prague

of the country. You have lunch here in a restaurant offering a range of dishes typical of the area.

Later this afternoon, you arrive in Prague – “golden” capital of the Czech Republic – and the crossroads of Europe. Located on the Vltava River, the city was originally five separate towns that today represent various districts of Prague. It was one of the few central European cities that did not suffer significant damage during the two World Wars; as a result, there is a host of lovely historical buildings that remain in their original state. You check into the **Hotel Intercontinental**, where its central location provides you with easy access to the city’s key sights. This evening, you make your à la carte selections in the hotel’s top-floor restaurant, with lovely illuminated views of the city at night. (B,L,D)

Day 9 (Saturday)

PRAGUE

Prague is filled with rare delights – religious masterpieces from the Middle Ages and wonderful museums of history occupying old landmarks that are, in turn, works of art. The city also has an incredible number of cathedrals, palaces, and gardens dating back over half a millennium. Along the cobblestone streets and bridges, while visiting the Old Town Square, New Town, and the historic Jewish Quarter, you find an older, quieter

ACCOMMODATIONS

Budapest – Hotel Kempinski (3 nights)

A relaxing atmosphere, luxurious rooms, and elegant restaurants await you at the only member of The Leading Hotels of the World in Hungary.

Zakopane, Poland – Hotel Orbis Kasprowy (1)

Set on the slope of Gubalowka Hill, from where the peaks surrounding Zakopane Valley are clearly visible, guest rooms and dining areas have impressive mountain views.

Cracow – Hotel Forum (2)

The Forum Hotel Cracow - an elegant, first class hotel conveniently situated on the bank of the Vistula River, offering a scenic view of the Royal Wawel Castle and the Skalka medieval church. It is the ideal location for visiting Cracow’s historical sights.

Prague – Hotel Intercontinental (3)

Located in the medieval Old Town, close to unique historical monuments and with marvelous views of Prague Castle, the hotel reflects the ambiance of the royal past. The spacious guest rooms offer luxurious accommodation.

Cesky Krumlov – Hotel Ruze (1)

Originally a Jesuit monastery, this historic building has been renovated into a charming hotel.

Vienna – Hotel Imperial (3), *Leading Hotels of the World, Conde Nast Gold List 1999*

At one time, this building was Vienna’s most prominent ducal palace. The spacious opulence of the Baroque marble lobby with its glittering chandeliers offers a vivid picture of “old Vienna”.

Europe. This afternoon, you have leisure time for shopping in some of Prague’s best shops featuring items such as Bohemian crystal, china, wooden toys, and antiques. Many of these stores are conveniently located in the city’s center, especially in the area around Wenceslas Square. You have a most enjoyable treat this evening – you go to a performance at the Opera after your à la carte dinner in a local restaurant. (B,L,D)

Day 10 (Sunday)

PRAGUE

The history of Prague begins with the Prague Castle that was founded in the 9th century. Its assorted sharp spires and roofs are the definitive landmark of the city. The complex sits high above the Vltava River; and within its walls are a palace, three churches, chapels, towers and a monastery, representing the architecture of every period of its history. You see St. Vitus’s Cathedral, the Royal Palace, St. George’s Basilica and Convent, and the Golden Lane, among other sights. There is a wonderful view of Prague from the South Gardens laid out along the former ramparts of the Castle. Today, Vaclav Havel, president of the republic, has his offices here. After a free afternoon to explore the city on your own, join your fellow travelers for dinner at a restaurant featuring such typical local dishes as vegetable soups, beef with dumplings, smoked pork, and roast duck with sauerkraut, followed by very tasty strudels, fruit dumplings, or crepes. (B,L,D)

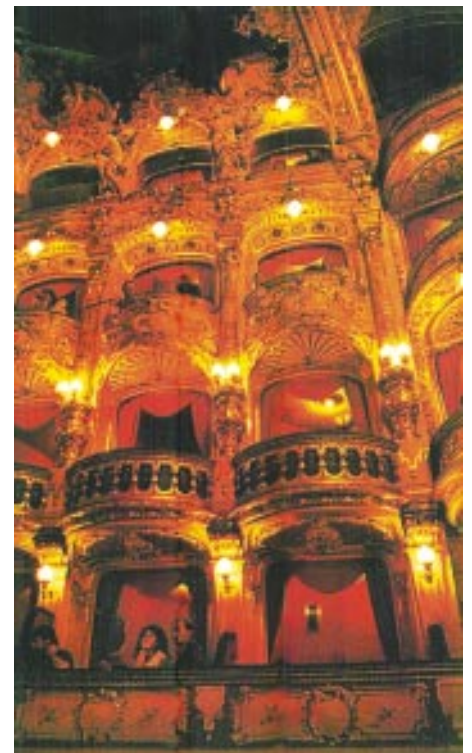
Day 11 (Monday)

PRAGUE – CESKY KRUMLOV

This morning you journey southward from Prague through the rolling green hills and medieval towns of Southern Bohemia.

Germans and Czechs have lived together on this land for centuries; since the end of World War II, the area has been considered a “close family relation” to nearby Austria and Bavaria. You stop in the town of Tabor, named after a Biblical mountain and settled for the sole purpose of receiving Christ on his return to earth in the Second Coming.

You have lunch in Cesky Krumlov – a town that is described in UNESCO’s World Heritage List as “second only to Venice in terms of its beauty and cultural significance”. Postcards of this village will



Enjoy a performance at Prague Opera

FOR RESERVATIONS, PLEASE TELEPHONE TOLL FREE: 1-888-377-8023



Astronomical Clock, Old Town Square, Prague

never do it justice. The picturesque, narrow, winding streets cling like ribbons to the hills as they follow the terrain around and down to the Vltava River that, in turn, winds around it. Standing watch from above is the majestic castle of the Rozmberk family (one of the wealthiest and oldest noble families in the area). You check into your hotel, the **Ruze**, which is housed in an historic building that was once a Jesuit monastery. In the evening, you make your à la carte dinner selections



Imperial Palace, Vienna

in the hotel's charming restaurant. (B,L,D)

Day 12 (Tuesday)

CESKY KRUMLOV - VIENNA

This morning, you continue traveling through the green hills and forests of Southern Bohemia and cross the border into Austria where the landscape is dotted with farms on low rolling hills. Numerous images come to mind when thinking of Vienna – magnificent architecture along wide boulevards, elaborate imperial palaces, coffee houses offering delectable pastries, crystal chandeliers, lace curtains, Baroque mirrors, choirboys with angelic voices, horse-drawn carriages, the blue Danube River, Strauss's waltz, and elegant shops.

Upon your arrival in Vienna, you check into the **Hotel Imperial**, which was once the city's most prominent ducal palace. The wealth of antiques, tapestries, polished marble, crystal, and honey-toned wood provides an elite yet warm setting. This evening, you dine from the à la carte menu, pampered by an attentive staff and entertained by the strains of live music. (B,L,D)

Day 13 (Wednesday)

VIENNA

For six centuries, Vienna was the residence of the imperial court, and the influence of the Habsburgs remains clearly evident. Now the seat of the neutral federal government, it enjoys considerable prestige. Set in the Danube River valley, with the hills of the Vienna Woods creating a northern and western border, the city is built on both sides of the Danube.

St. Stephen's Cathedral, with its glorious tiled roof, is at the heart of the old city in the *Innere Stadt*, which is encircled by the Ringstrasse. It was built on the site of a 12th-century church – the main entrance of the original building was incorporated into the present building. You visit the Imperial Palace (*Hofburg*) – the favorite residence of the Habsburgs - and see the imperial apartments as well as the treasury. There is ample time this afternoon for shopping for items such as porcelains, enamelware, and needle-point in the shops along the pedestrian-only thoroughfares of Kärtner

Strasse, Graben and the Kohlmarkt; the numerous cafes will also tempt you with a coffee and pastry.

Early this evening, you attend a Mozart and Strauss concert in a palace in town. Afterward, you go to a typical Viennese wine tavern (*Heuriger*) to sample the local specialties for dinner. (B,L,D)

Day 14 (Thursday)

VIENNA

Today you visit the sumptuous Baroque Schönbrunn Palace, constructed in the late 1700s; it was home to Empress Maria Theresa (as well as Napoleon). Painted in Maria Theresa's favorite shade of yellow, there are 1,441 rooms (including a chapel and a theater). In 1918, in the Blue Chinese Salon, the last Habsburg emperor, Charles I, abdicated; and the palace became the property of the new republic. Later, you get "off the beaten track" to enjoy the nature of the Vienna Woods as you drive through charming wine-producing villages and rocky, wooded valleys. Join your companions tonight for dinner in an elegant hunting lodge outside the city. (B,L,D)

Day 15 (Friday)

VIENNA - USA

This morning, your journey ends, and you are escorted to the Vienna Airport for your flight to the States. (B)

DATES

Depart-FRI (from USA)	Return-FRI
Jul 21	Aug 04
2001 Dates:	
Jul 20	Aug 03

COST PER PERSON

Land Portion (Double occupancy)	\$ 6,195
Single supplement	\$ 1,380
International Airfare (New York)	\$ 990
<p><i>All airfares are subject to availability and to change by the airlines. Cancellation penalties and surcharges may apply. Fares from other U.S. cities, as well as First and Business Class rates, are also available.</i></p>	

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